

Joel 2:21-27
Psalm 126
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Matthew 6:25-33

Sermon October 10th, 2021

God Takes Care of Us

As I transition to this period in my life called middle age, I know I have a lot more to learn about the ins and outs of this world. But, one truth I feel I have learned about life so far is that we worry too much. We worry too much about money (**Image**). Will I be able to pay the rent or mortgage on time? Will I have enough money leftover at the end of the month to save for retirement? For my children's education? Will I be able to pay down my debt? Will I be able to afford the grocery bill? Will I be able to replace my holey clothes?

We worry too much about our appearance (**Image**). "I wish I could just shave off a few more pounds." "I can't believe my hair is turning grey." "What! I'm going bald?" "Dad you can't wear loafers when you come pick me up at school." "I will be just a few more hours. I mean minutes. I just need to cover up this last wrinkle." How many of us turned our cameras off during a zoom meeting this past eighteen months because we didn't want people to see us in our home comfort state. Unshaven. Without make up. Hair doing whatever it wants.

We worry too much about what other people think about us. "If I be myself maybe this person won't like me." "I can't believe I just said that. What do they think of me now?" Sometimes we can find ourselves obsessing over something we said or did or didn't say or do. When the person on the receiving end might not be thinking about it at all.

We worry too much. And this worry has taken its toll on us. More and more people are taking anti-anxiety medication to cope with their anxiety (**Image**). More and more people are dealing with ulcers or some kind of acid reflux disease, which are triggered by stress and worry.

In our gospel, the disciples have given up everything to follow Jesus, and now they too are worried excessively about what they are going to eat or drink. And whether they will be able to afford respectable clothes for themselves. Especially when they go out on their missions.

Now some worry is healthy as it warns us about a problem. So, we can do what we can to stay safe. But worry itself can become a problem when it paralyzes us from being all that God creates us to be.

The disciples' worries are now getting in the way of them doing the work God called them to do. Their focused too much on their needs, and not enough, on the needs of the communities they enter.

Do our worries sometimes get in the way of us being able to do the work God calls us to do? Do our financial worries make it harder for us to give to others in need? Do our worries around what people think about us make it harder for us to share the good news of Jesus? Or make it harder for us to stand with the marginalized people in our community? Do our worries paralyze us from living out the gospel?

Well, in response to our excessive worries, Jesus invites us to trust in God. To believe that God does take care of us. Even when our worries seem to try and convince us otherwise.

When Jesus invites the disciples to go out in the communities and share the gospel, Jesus also invites them to lean on the hospitality of the people in the communities they enter. God will provide for their needs through the kindness of strangers (**Image**).

Of course, there will be fears and worries, as they don't know how people will receive them and their message. But Jesus reassures them that God will work through people in these communities to care for their needs. And what we find out in the book of Acts, is that for the most part, this is their experience.

The other night I was watching the national, and they shared a story about a man and his dog from Scotland who are walking across Canada to raise money so he can plant trees in the Highlands of Scotland (**Image**). What is so moving about this story is how hospitable people are to this man and his dog as they pass through communities. The people bring him and the dog food, water. Offer them a place to stay for the night. Throughout his journey he has experienced the hospitality of strangers.

God indeed provides for our needs through the kindness of others. How many times has a friend or a family member or a stranger helped you out? Easing your anxiety. Taking care of your needs. God works through our neighbours. God works through us.

When we don't worry so much about how much money we have we can feel freer to help others in need. To be that hospitable stranger. Helping people see that indeed God provides for our needs.

When we don't worry so much about what people think of us, we are more able to receive the hospitality that others have to offer us. Trusting that God will provide for our well being through these people.

This weekend we celebrate Thanksgiving. A holiday where we gather with friends, family, and even those in our community in need, and enjoy the gift of food together. Of

course, with what feels like at times, the never-ending pandemic, our thanksgiving gatherings have been downsized somewhat once again. But we will still feast on a sizable Turkey (**Image**). Though it may take us several more days to finish it off. We will still salivate over stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy. We will still live in anticipation of the sweet taste of pie. We will still give thanks to God for providing for our wellbeing. We will give thanks to God for our loved ones. For the food we eat, and the clothes we wear on our backs. We will give thanks to God for the house we gather in. We will give thanks to God for lifting us up when we feel down. We will give thanks to God for giving us peace when we feel anxious. We will give thanks to God who takes care of us day and night throughout our lives. Who is present with us even when our anxiety seems to get the best of us.

Today as we witness Leighton's baptism, we give thanks to God for the gift of baptism (**Image**). For the promise that God will be with us always. Providing for our needs. Showing us hospitality through those we meet. When Leighton received the waters of baptism today, she received this promise that God will walk with her throughout her life. Providing for her needs. Showing her hospitality through us. Through those in her community when she feels anxious.

Through her Godmother and her parents, Leighton makes a promise that she too will live her life showing hospitality to others. Or at least try like the rest of us try to live out this promise we made with God on the day of our baptism.

And sometimes we will fall short. But having a day dedicated to thanksgiving gives us an opportunity to reconnect with this promise that we made to God. This promise that says we will do our best to provide for others in need. To stand with those in our community who are marginalized. To be hospitable to others.

As we hear our gospel today. As we gather here in person or online today. We give thanks for all that God has provided for us, and through this gratefulness we do our part to show hospitality to those in need in our community. To give back a little of what we have been given so someone else can have a happy thanksgiving (**Image**).

We live out this hospitality, because Jesus invites us to trust in a God who is indeed trustworthy. A God who cares for all of creation. The birds, the flowers, us (**Image**). Thanks be to God.

Let us pray, loving God, we give thanks for all you do to provide for our wellbeing. We give thanks for those in our lives who have shown us hospitality. When we feel anxious calm our hearts with your peace. Helping us be hospitable to others. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen**.